

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

ENVILLE

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**ENVILLE**

Name: ENVILLE

County: Staffordshire

District: South Staffordshire (District Authority)

Parish: Enville

County: Staffordshire

District: South Staffordshire (District Authority)

Parish: Kinver

label.localisation: Latitude: 52.471626  
Longitude: -2.2658526  
National Grid Reference: SO 82038 85999  
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden  
Grade: II\*  
List Entry Number: 1000114  
Date first listed: 01-Dec-1984

## Details

A landscape park of c 1750 designed with the assistance of William Shenstone and remains of extensive gardens of mid C19 associated with a country house.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The manor of Enville was held from the early C16 by the Greys. Harry Grey, who inherited the estate in 1709, became the third Earl of Stamford in 1720, and thereafter Enville descended from the earldom. Harry died in 1739 and his son Harry (d 1768) married Lady Mary Booth (d 1772), daughter and heir of the wealthy George, Earl of Warrington (d 1758). It was during their time that the surrounds of Enville Hall were improved by William Shenstone (1743-63) and a range of buildings erected, and by the late C18 Enville ranked with Hagley (qv) and The Leasowes (qv) as a place of pilgrimage for those of taste. The seventh Earl, who succeeded in 1845, was a keen gardener, and during his time spectacular and extensive flower gardens were laid out and once again Enville became celebrated. On the death of the seventh Earl's widow in 1905 the Staffordshire estates passed to her grandniece Catherine, daughter of the Rev Henry Payne, rector of Enville, and wife of Sir Henry Foley Lambert, Bt. The Lamberts took the name Grey in 1905. Enville remains (1997) in private hands.

### DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Enville Hall and its park lies to the south of the village of Enville, close to the county boundary with Shropshire. The village lies on the A458 from Bridgnorth to Stourbridge, the latter c 8km to the south-east. Roads from Enville bound the park to the north and to the east, and minor local roads also run around its west and south parts. The area here registered comprises c 300ha.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** The formal approach to the Hall is from the east, along the straight, tree-lined avenue off the minor road south from Enville where there is a wooden gate and stone flanking walls with, running off to the north, good later C19 decorative iron park fencing. The everyday approach is from the north, via a road from Enville, which joins the formal approach at its west end. At this point, marking the entrance to the gardens and the final approach to the south front of the Hall, is a pair of tall, C18 brick gate piers with cast-iron gates (listed grade II).

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** Enville Hall (listed grade II) is a large and complex building. The core of the building, which forms the recessed central portion of the south front, is of brick and was built by 1548. The house was enlarged in the 1680s, and especially in the early C18 when the enclosed court and the coach house and stables (listed grade II) beyond were built by William Baker (1705-71). In the 1770s John Hope of Liverpool (1734-1808) added a nine-bay, pedimented, classical north-west wing while the rest of the building was gothicised with embattled parapets and rendered over. Various alterations were made in the early C20, at which time a porte-cochere was added to the south front.

The Home Farm, on the west side of Temple Pool 200m to the south of the Hall, is a large and impressive brick complex of the mid C18, and was probably built to a design by William Baker who produced plans for work at Enville in 1748-50.

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** The celebrated Victorian gardens and pleasure grounds at Enville lay mainly to the north of the Hall, overlapping with the north-eastern sector of the mid C18 pleasure grounds which saw some adaptation. The main view from the north side of the Hall is now across shaved lawns to woodland with specimen trees, and only some of the main C19 features are readily apparent.

About 100m west of the Hall, across a lawn, is the triangular Seahorse or Ha-ha Pool, so-called after its once-spectacular mid C19 triton-with-seahorses fountain (listed grade II; ruinous 1997). This pool is fed from Jordan's Pool 100m to the west, around which there are walks, notably across the pool head. Another mid C19 fountain, the Shell Fountain, stands c 80m north of the Hall with the Dolphin Fountain 130m further to the north-east. Some 100m north of the Dolphin Fountain is the site of the great conservatory discussed below, while 350m to its east is the cage-like Eaglery or Owl House of 1856.

The gardens north of the Hall, developed between the later 1840s and the 1860s by the seventh Earl, were, in their heyday, among the most spectacular in the midlands, and were open to the public from 1853. Plans were submitted by John Pope & Sons, Smethick nurserymen, in 1848, and by the end of the 1850s flower and ornamental gardens covering seventy acres, with ribbon borders and shrubberies, had been laid out by the head gardener John Aiton, and the Chinese Pagoda, an aviary (1850-1), and the Eaglery, built. Centrepieces included the fountains, fed from a reservoir on The Sheepwalks, itself supplied by water pumped from pools at The Batch (outside the registered area), north-west of Essex Wood; one threw a jet 180 feet into the air. At the gardens' centre stood a large conservatory in mixed Gothic and Moorish styles erected in 1853-4 to designs by Gray & Ormson of London. The gardens declined after the Grey estates were divided in 1905, and the conservatory was dismantled between 1928 and 1938.

**PARK** The landscaped park extends principally to the south-west of Enville Hall, rising through Essex Wood to the high, open pasture of The Sheepwalks from which there are panoramic views in all directions. In the middle of The Sheepwalks is the Shepherd's Lodge (or Sheepwalk House), a gothic brick building of the mid C18 (although with an earlier brick core), ruinous in 1997. In the late C18

Running back north-east through Essex Wood to the flat ground around the Hall are two valleys. Down the more southerly, a wooded dingle, is a chain of small ponds connected by mid C18 cascades (in 1803 attributed to Shenstone; overgrown and largely ruinous in 1997) which could be fed in spectacular fashion from a holding pond (dry in 1997) 700m to the west on the south-west corner of Essex Wood. On the north side of the uppermost pool is an C18 cold bath, covered by a C19 or C20 superstructure with corrugated-iron roof. The cascades are overlooked from Ralph's Bastion on the edge of Round Wood 150m to the north; the twelve-sided bastion, which also looks towards the Hall and the site of Lyndon House (gothicised perhaps by Sanderson Miller (1716-80) c 1750; demolished c 1961), is of brick with a sandstone plinth. Of the C18, a painting shows a high-backed, white-painted seat upon it. Running north from the bastion for 200m is the Hornbeam Walk (present by 1838), largely overgrown in 1997. At the north end of the Walk, immediately below the end of Round Wood, is the Grotto (or Donkey Hovel), a ruinous C18 grotto with slag encrustations. Some 550m south-west of the Bastion, on the edge of Essex Wood at the

head of the valley, is the base of the C18 Rotunda, re-used in the C19 as the foundations for a bandstand. On the south side of the head of the valley is Priest Wood. Within this, in a yew grove, is Shenstone's Chapel (listed grade II), a gothic church-like building of roughcast brick with a two-bay 'nave' and cylindrical west tower. The Chapel was in existence by the time Shenstone died in 1763.

The stream through the cascades leads into the rectangular Temple Pool, which lies 200m south of the Hall across a meadow separated from the south lawn by a brick ha-ha. By 1747 a Chinese Temple (still present 1762; demolished by 1777) had been built on an island in the Pool, one of the earliest recorded chinoiserie garden buildings in England. Perhaps after its removal a gothic boathouse (first mentioned 1769) was built at the north-east corner of the Pool; a tree fell on this c 1970 and only the lower parts of the walls survived in 1997. Some 200m south of the Pool, on the skyline, is an urn.

The more northerly valley is larger, and its bottom pasture ground and its sides well wooded. At its head, looking back to the Hall, is The Summerhouse, a late C18 Doric seat or temple (listed grade II) attributed to Sanderson Miller.

Essex Wood retains numbers of mature specimen trees among its commercial woodland, some apparently survivals of the more formal, pre 1750 landscape with avenues. The Wood is cut through with rides and walks, the main one being Ash Walk, which runs south-west of the more northerly valley. At its east end is the Gothic Gate (listed grade II), designed by Sanderson Miller c 1750. From here there are panoramic views back to the Hall and across the landscape of the Dudley area beyond.

In the north part of Essex Wood, north of the more northerly valley, are the remains of several buildings and features. Most lie around the triangular pond known as Jordan's Pool, which lies at the east end of the Wood, c 200m west of the Hall. About 150m west of the west end of the Pool is the Hermitage or Cottage (ruinous 1997), which a photograph shows to have been a rude stone structure with gothic details. About 100m to the north is the Chinese Pagoda (listed grade II; ruinous 1997), a mid C19 wooden structure of cruciform plan with a two-storey central tower. Immediately beyond the east end of Essex Wood, and c 200m north-west of the Hall is the Museum (listed grade II\*; known earlier, reflecting its changing function, as The Gothick Greenhouse, The Billiard Room, and The Summerhouse), a gothic building of 1749-50 with three large ogee arches to the front and (like the boathouse on Temple Pool) elaborate interior plasterwork. The building is usually attributed to Sanderson Miller although other architects, including T F Pritchard (1723-77), have been suggested.

Some 500m south of the Home Farm and bounding the park is Lydon Covert, through which runs the Serpentine Walk, reached via a drive from the west end of The Avenue. On the south side of the Covert is Sampson's Cave, a mid C18 rock dwelling with three rooms.

The area developed as a landscape park in the mid C18 had earlier been a deer park, present in 1548, but partly under cultivation in the early C17 and inclosed by 1688. Lengths of its pale can be traced around Essex Wood, to the immediate south-west of the Hall. Landscaping had begun by 1750 as the fourth Earl took in the Leigh House and Lyndon estates to enlarge the former park, planted a double avenue approaching the south front of the Hall, created Temple Pool, and laid out woodland walks with buildings. On Round Hill avenues radiated from a central point on top of the hill where there was a 'wooden turning seat'. One finished at Ralph's Bastion, another at the Grotto. By 1754 William Shenstone, poet and landscape theorist, had become Lord Stamford's adviser at Enville, which he had first visited in 1750 and which he continued to come to until his death in 1763, a demise reputedly caused or hastened by a visit to Enville where he caught a chill which brought on the fatal 'putrid fever' (CL 1901, 338). His work was carried on, by among others, Booth Grey (d 1802), second son of the fourth Earl. In 1759 Dr Wilkes noted that thousands of pounds had been laid out on the landscape which he reckoned had few rivals. By the 1770s the landscape was much visited and popularly ranked with Hagley and The Leasowes, and a carriage drive was laid out around the park to make visiting easier. By 1830, however, J C Loudon (*Encyclopaedia of Gardening*, 1076) was describing the grounds as 'formerly celebrated'.

**KITCHEN GARDEN** The brick-walled kitchen garden lies c 300m north of the Hall, and measures c 180m north/south by c 130 east/west. By 1997 the glasshouses which formerly stood along the north wall had been demolished although the sheds along the exterior of the wall survived, as did the mid C19 Fruit House to the west of the garden. The garden was begun in 1853 as part of the expansion and reorganisation of the Hall's garden in the mid C19, for which by 1864 over 100,000 bedding plants were required each season.

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Immediately to the south of the kitchen garden is Enville cricket ground, which since the C19 has been held to be one of the best small grounds in the country.

REFERENCES S Shaw, *History and Antiquities of Staffordshire II i*, (1798-1801, reprinted 1976), pp 270-3 W M Marshall, *On Planting & Rural Ornament* (1803), pp 327-35 J C Loudon, *Encyclopaedia of Gardening* (1830 edn), p 1076 *The Cottage Gardener*, (5 January 1854), pp 263-4 *The Florist*, (November 1855), pp 325-9 *J Horticulture and Cottage Gardener*, (1 November 1864), pp 353-6; (8 November 1864), pp 372-6; (15 November 1864), pp 393-6 *Country Life*, 9 (16 March 1901), pp 336-42 *The Victoria History of the County of Staffordshire* 20, (1984), pp 91-103

Archival items Estate papers at Enville Hall (under arrangement 1997) (private collection) Later C19 album of photographs at Enville Hall (private collection)

Description written: 1997 Register Inspector: PAS Edited: September 1999

## Legal

This garden or other land is registered under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 within the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens by Historic England for its special historic interest.